



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE September 21, 1971

Dear Bill:

Enclosed as requested is a redraft of our paper on releasing the record on certain postwar international crises, along the lines discussed with you and Tom Latimer on Friday.

Sincerely,

Bill

William D. Blair, Jr.
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Public Affairs

Enclosure:

As stated.

Mr. William Rehnquist,
Assistant Attorney General,
Office of Legal Counsel,
Department of Justice.

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DECLASSIFICATION AND RELEASE OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD
OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EVENTS SINCE 1945

1. The purpose of this paper is to respond to the President's request, made orally to the Inter-agency Security Committee on July 1, 1971, and elaborated orally by his staff since that time, ^{for recommendations} on means of expediting the declassification and release of documents on major events in U.S. foreign policy since World War II. We understand the President considers the Korean War, the Lebanon Landings, the Bay of Pigs, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of particular importance in this context.

2. It is assumed that the opening of entire files for so recent a period is not feasible. The records must therefore be selected by historians, declassified by the appropriate officers, and made available to the public.

3. The traditional mechanism for releasing the most important documents on United States foreign policy is publication in the annual documentary volumes entitled "Foreign Relations of the United States." This series is published by the State Department and monitored by a distinguished advisory council of historians, and includes Presidential documents and papers of all the foreign affairs agencies as required to tell the policy story. At one time the "Foreign Relations" series

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published documents only fifteen years after the event; but it has slipped backwards since World War II, and the documents now being published are those of 1946. Scholars have been increasingly insistent on the need to reduce this 25-year lag to 20 years or less.

Recommendation: That the President sign the attached directives (Tab A) instructing the State Department to institute a program to reduce the publication lag of the "Foreign Relations" series to 20 years within the next five years and directing other agencies to cooperate in carrying out this program.

Cost: The estimated cost of such a program is on the order of \$185,000 a year, for additional staff and printing.

4. If the Foreign Relations series is speeded up, as recommended above, and priority given to the Far East, the documents on the Korean War, ending in 1953, would be published comprehensively within about three years.

5. The other events mentioned by the President (Lebanon, 1958; Bay of Pigs, 1961; Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962), would not be reached by the expedited Foreign Relations series for ^{six} five years at the earliest (for Lebanon), and substantially longer for the two Cuban crises. In addition, we assume that the responsible policy officers would not at this time agree to the declassification and release of all the important documentation on these rela-

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interesting documentation on these subjects undoubtedly can be declassified now.

Recommendation.- That the President sign the attached directives (Tab B) instructing the State Department to collect the papers of historical significance on the Lebanon Landings, the Bay of Pigs, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and to make available for reporting and study by the press, the scholars and the public all of those that can be declassified. Priority should be given to the Lebanon Landings. Care should be taken in any public statement to avoid the claim that the documents being declassified now constitute the full record, since this could expose the Government to severe criticism.

Cost: To do this work without retarding later publication of the comprehensive record in "Foreign Relations" would require one additional historian plus funds for the reproduction of the documents -- perhaps \$20,000 for a year.

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Tab A 1

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Subject: Earlier publication of the "Foreign Relations" Series

I understand that publication of the official documentary series "Foreign Relations of the United States" has been slipping chronologically, and that these volumes are now being issued twenty-five years after the events they record. I think that the American people have a right to see the record of United States diplomacy more promptly than that. Accordingly I ask that you institute a program to reduce this lag to 20 years by 1976.

In view of the great interest in the development of United States policy toward the Far East, including the diplomacy of the Korean War, I believe that the volumes concerning this area should be given priority within the series in the immediate future.

I expect the comprehensive nature of the historical record as published in "Foreign Relations" to be fully maintained in expediting its publication, and I am instructing the National Security Council staff, the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency to cooperate in every way possible.

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Tab A 2

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE DIRECTOR OF ~~THE~~ CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE AGENCY—
THE ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY
AFFAIRS

Subject: Earlier publication of the "Foreign
Relations" Series

I am sending you herewith a copy of an instruction on this subject which I have sent today to the Secretary of State. I ask that you instruct all affected officers under your jurisdiction to cooperate with the Department of State in this intensive program to advance the publication of the official foreign policy record in this way. I expect that all officers declassifying documents for this project will exercise the greatest liberality commensurate with national security.

Richard Nixon

Attachment:

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Tab B 1

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Subject: Declassification and Release of Documents

I am convinced that much documentation pertaining to United States foreign policy is being held in a classified status much longer than necessary for the maintenance of our national security.

In addition to advancing the comprehensive publication of the record in "Foreign Relations of the United States," I believe that much of the documentation can be declassified and made available to the public earlier.

As a beginning, please assemble the historical record of the Lebanon Landings (1958), the Bay of Pigs (1961), and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). All documents on these subjects which can be declassified now should be reproduced and made available promptly to the public.

As a test run I should like to have priority given to the Lebanon Landings. Please report to me on the status of this project within two months.

Richard Nixon

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Tab B 2

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
THE ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY
AFFAIRS

Subject: Declassification and Release of Documents

I am sending you herewith a copy of a memorandum which I am sending today to the Secretary of State, regarding the declassification and release of documents on certain international crises of the postwar period. Please instruct your staffs to cooperate with the State Department in collecting this documentation and in declassifying it to the fullest extent commensurate with the requirements of our national security.

Richard Nixon

Attachment: